

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 32-33. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-31 (canceled)

32 (currently amended): A probe comprising substrate in the shape of a plate or a strip having a flat surface and an adsorbent covalently bound to the surface, the adsorbent having a binding characteristic for binding an analyte, wherein the binding characteristic varies in a continuous gradient along one or more linear axes of the probe, wherein the probe is removably insertable into a laser desorption/ionization mass spectrometer.

33 (currently amended): The probe of claim 32 wherein the binding characteristic varies in a gradient along one linear axis of the probe.

34 (previously presented): The probe of claim 33 wherein the adsorbent is an anion exchange adsorbent and the binding characteristic varies according to charge.

35 (previously presented): The probe of claim 33 wherein the adsorbent is a cation exchange adsorbent and the binding characteristic varies according to charge.

36 (previously presented): The probe of claim 33 wherein the adsorbent is a hydrophilic adsorbent and the binding characteristic varies according to hydrophilicity.

37 (previously presented): The probe of claim 33 wherein the adsorbent is a hydrophobic adsorbent and the binding characteristic varies according to hydrophobicity.

16 38 (previously presented): The probe of claim 33 wherein the adsorbent is a
17 metal chelate adsorbent and the binding characteristic varies according to valency.

18 39 (previously presented): The probe of any of claims 32-38 further comprising
19 an analyte bound to the adsorbent.

20 40 (previously presented): The probe of any of claims 39 further comprising an
21 energy absorbing molecule contacting the analyte.

41-70 (canceled)